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(54) A method of using a transfer aid for repositioning patients

(57) A method of repositioning a patient on a supporting surface comprises the steps of starting with a flat sheet of flexible material (10, Fig. 1) having a low friction surface, folding one part of the sheet 10a under another part of the sheet 10b so that the low friction surface of the two parts of the sheet are in contact with one another, positioning a patient to be moved on the folded part of the sheet, and moving the patient or the sheet so that the top part of the folded sheet 10b slides over the bottom part 10a and so that the bottom part 10a progressively unfolds and eventually becomes co-extensive with the top part of the sheet 10b. The sheet (10, Fig. 1) may be made of a woven material with the low friction surface being a silicone elastomer coating. Preferably each longitudinal side of the sheet (10, Fig. 1) has at least one hand grip.

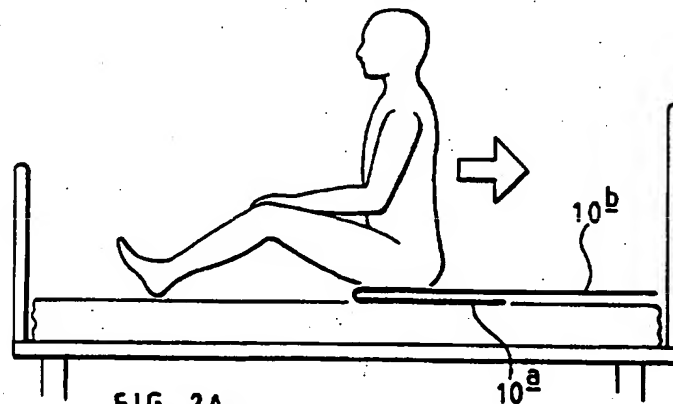
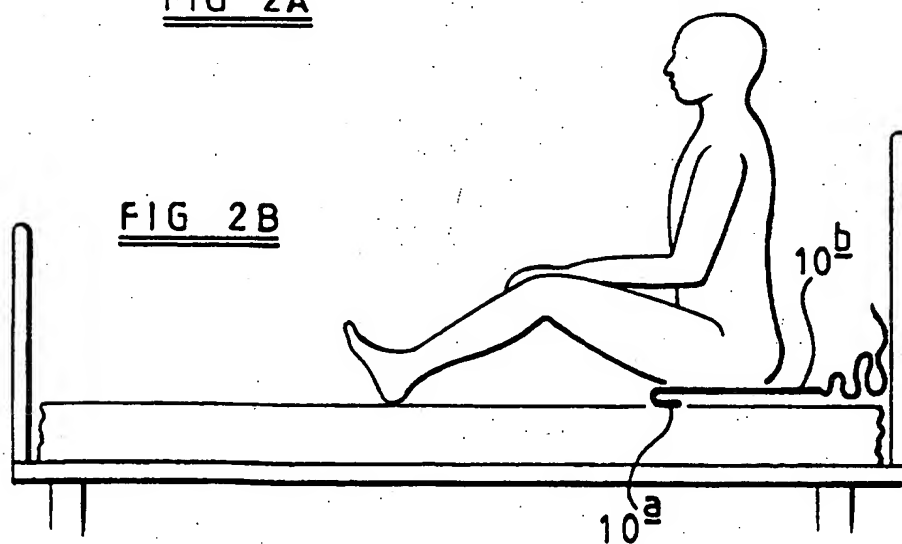
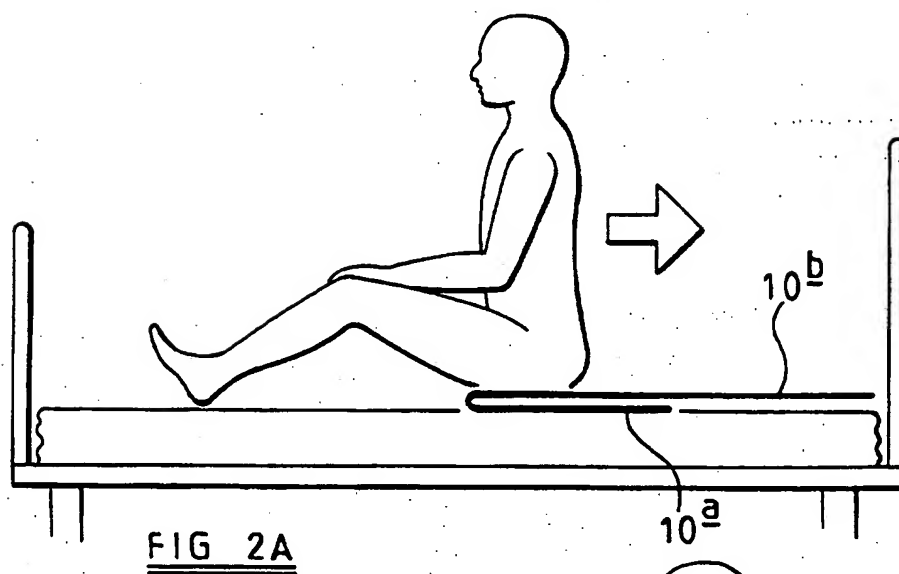
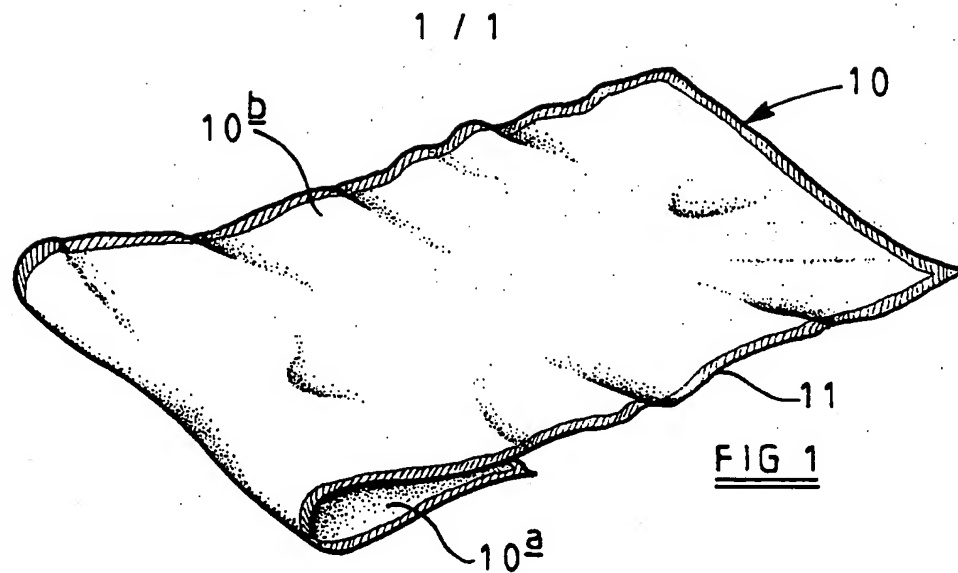


FIG 2A

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A TRANSFER AID FOR REPOSITIONING PATIENTS

This invention relates to a transfer aid for repositioning patients.

5 Many transfer aids have been developed in recent years for reducing the effort required of nursing staff to move patients. One such aid has been developed for repositioning a patient on a supporting surface, such as a bed, stretcher or the like, and comprises an open-ended sleeve made of flexible sheet material with a low friction internal surface. The sleeve is placed in a collapsed condition on the supporting surface alongside a patient and the patient is rolled onto the sleeve. The patient is then pulled or pushed on the sleeve in a direction generally perpendicular to the axis of the sleeve. The friction between the patient and the upper half-sheet causes the upper half-sheet to move with the patient and to slide on the lower half-sheet.

15 Theoretically, the patient should be moved off one end of the sleeve as the upper half sheet progressively moves into the position of the lower half sheet and vice-versa, but in reality this does not often happen and the patient remains on the sleeve with the result that the patient and sleeve slip back when released due to the low friction between the upper and lower half sheets.

20 In seeking to overcome this drawback, the present invention provides a method of repositioning a patient on a supporting surface, comprising the steps of:

- a. starting with a flat sheet of flexible material having a low friction surface,
- b. folding one part of the sheet under another part of the sheet so that the low friction surface of the two parts of the sheet are in contact with one another,
- c. positioning a patient to be moved on the folded part of the sheet, and
- d. moving the patient or the sheet so that the top part of the folded sheet slides over the bottom part of the folded sheet and so that the bottom part of the sheet progressively unfolds and eventually becomes co-extensive with the said top part of the sheet.

With such a method, there is a much reduced risk of the patient slipping back as the low friction surface of the sheet will come wholly into contact with the supporting surface.

Preferably, the sheet is provided with at least one hand grip on each longitudinal side of the sheet so as to enable nurses to slide the top part of the sheet over the bottom part of the sheet with a patient thereon.

The sheet may be made of woven material coated on one surface with a silicone elastomer.

The invention will now be more particularly described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of a sheet for performing
5 a method according to the present invention, and

Figures 2A and 2B illustrate diagrammatically how the method according to the invention is performed.

10 Referring firstly to Figure 1 of the drawings, the sheet 10 shown therein is typically formed of woven material and has one surface coated with a low friction material, such as a silicone elastomer.

The sheet has a tape 11 secured, such as by stitching, along its edge. Hand
15 grips may be provided by further short tapes (not shown) or by providing hand holes (also not shown) in the sheet 10. These hand grips should be close to the two longitudinal edges of the sheet 10. In use, one part 10_a of the sheet is folded under the other part 10_b of the sheet so that the low friction surfaces of the two parts 10_a and 10_b are in contact with one another.

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A patient to be moved is then positioned on the folded part of the sheet as shown in Figure 2A. This can be achieved by placing the folded sheet alongside the patient and rolling the patient onto the folded part of the sheet.

Nurses on opposite sides of the sheet then move the sheet by pulling on the hand grips (or by moving the patient) so that the top part 10_b of the folded sheet slides over the bottom part 10_a of the folded sheet. The bottom part 10_a of the sheet progressively unfolds (as shown in Figure 2B) and eventually becomes co-extensive
5 with the top part 10_b of the sheet.

The patient remains on the sheet, but the low friction surface of the sheet is now in contact with the supporting surface, be it a bed, stretcher or the like, and is, therefore, less likely to slip back than the sleeve hitherto used.

CLAIMS

1. A method of repositioning a patient on a supporting surface, comprising the steps of:

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- a) starting with a flat sheet of flexible material having a low friction surface,
- b. folding one part of the sheet under another part of the sheet so that the low friction surface of the two parts of
- 10 the sheet are in contact with one another,
- c. positioning a patient to be moved on the folded part of the sheet, and
- d. moving the patient or the sheet so that the top part of the folded sheet slides over the bottom part of the folded
- 15 sheet and so that the bottom part of the sheet progressively unfolds and eventually becomes co-extensive with the said top part of the sheet.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the sheet is provided with at least
- 20 one hand grip on each longitudinal side of the sheet so as to enable nurses to slide the top part of the sheet over the bottom part of the sheet with a patient thereon.

3. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the sheet is made of woven material coated on one surface with a silicone elastomer.

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provided in association with the gripping means to strengthen the aid where they are positioned. In these cases the gripping means may be secured to the additional tape. The additional tape could extend along the entire
5 length of the patient transfer aid, e.g. along or inwardly from its longitudinal edges, or be positioned just where gripping means are provided. The gripping means may be attached to the sheet material or additional tape by any suitable means including adhesive or
10 preferably stitching.

Varying the distance of the gripping means from the central axis can be effected by varying the position at which they are fixed on the sheet material. Where the
15 longitudinal sides are substantially parallel, e.g. with a substantially rectangular transfer patient aid, the gripping means will vary in their position from the longitudinal sides. It is advantageous, however, to provide the gripping means at the periphery or edge of
20 the longitudinal sides of the transfer patient aid and variation in the distance of the gripping means can be effected in such cases by varying the distance of those sides from the central axis. In other words the flexible sheet material may be shaped so that at least one of its
25 longitudinal sides does not extend substantially parallel with the central (longitudinal) axis. At least one, and preferably both, of the longitudinal sides may, for example, taper from a maximum width to a minimum width.



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Claims searched: 1-4

Examiner: Matthew Lawson
Date of search: 21 July 1997

Patents Act 1977
Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.O): A4L (LAS), B8H (HLD)

Int Cl (Ed.6): A61G 7/10

Other: -

Documents considered to be relevant:

| Category | Identity of document and relevant passage | Relevant to claims |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Y | GB 2282126 A (STRONG) page 8 lines 15-28 and the handgrips 16 in figures 1-3A & 4. | 2,3 |
| X, Y | US 5148558 (DUNN) the whole document. | X: 1 Y: 2,3 |

X Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step
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